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New Departures in European Political Cooperation

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An Intelligence Assessment

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New Departures in European Political Cooperation

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An Intelligence Assessment

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**New Departures in European
Political Cooperation**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 16 September 1983
was used in this report.*

The scope and intensity of European Political Cooperation (EPC) have increased markedly during the past two years. The Ten have adopted a series of new procedures to facilitate policy coordination and crisis management and have broadened EPC discussions to include economic and security issues. As a result, the United States increasingly confronts coordinated EC stands on a variety of topics.

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These developments reflect a determination by EC governments and institutions to promote a role for the Community in global affairs and to overcome differences among themselves before consulting with third countries, including the United States. Moreover, EPC is a way to promote the appearance of European unity despite the slackening of economic integration.

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Because EPC remains an informal mechanism, the country holding the EC presidency—which rotates among EC members every six months—can influence the content and outcome of discussions. We believe that Greece will not intensify the pace of political cooperation during the remainder of its term because of personnel and domestic political constraints. France, however, is likely to take an active approach when it assumes the presidency in January. More than in the case of recent president-countries, ideological and domestic political factors are likely to induce the Socialist-led governments in Greece and France to propose policies that take issue with US views.

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Because the United States, by informal agreement, relays its views at EPC meetings through the president-country's representative, the degree of US influence in EPC depends largely on the state of bilateral relations with the president-country. The United States also can try to limit the scope and slow the pace of EPC by attempting to restrict discussions of transatlantic security and economic issues to multilateral forums in which Washington actively participates, such as NATO and the OECD.

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Table 1
Recent Instances of Political Cooperation

Issues	Policy	Procedures
Madrid CSCE Conference November 1980–September 1983	The EC Ambassadors at Madrid strongly supported a substantive concluding document that included provisions for a European disarmament conference. They resisted US calls for major changes in the human rights provisions of the draft negotiating text proposed by the neutral and nonaligned (NNA) participants. When the USSR endorsed the same text in toto last April, however, the EC states joined with the United States in insisting on several limited but substantive revisions.	The US Embassy in Madrid reports that representatives of the Ten met regularly to work out common positions prior to discussions with the United States and other Allies in the NATO caucus. The desire for consensus moved the UK and the Netherlands to modify their demands for major changes in the NNA draft text of a concluding document.
Martial law in Poland December 1981–July 1983	As a result of EPC discussions, the EC foreign ministers issued a strong condemnation of the Polish moves, imposed restrictions—largely symbolic—on certain luxury imports from the Soviet Union, and agreed not to discuss a new rescheduling of Poland's external debt. They also endorsed NATO's decisions to suspend high-level contacts between Warsaw and Western governments.	EPC produced joint action despite the dissent of EC member states. Greece chose not to initiate sanctions and Denmark later suspended them, but neither country actively opposed or threatened to veto action by the Community.
The Falklands conflict April–June 1982	The foreign ministers were able to agree on only modest economic sanctions against Argentina. The Community action had symbolic value, however, at a time when the United States was still taking a publicly neutral stance.	As in the Polish issue, political cooperation resulted in sanctions despite the reservations of two dissenters—in this case Italy and Ireland. Both countries opted out when asked to renew the measures but chose not to challenge their continuation by the other eight. In addition, as in the pipeline controversy, EPC discussions resulted in economic decisions, the implementation of which in the Council—the organ technically responsible—was largely a formality.
Soviet pipeline sanctions June–November 1982	EPC became a vehicle for galvanizing EC opposition to the US sanctions. The US ban on sales of equipment and technology for the Siberian gas pipeline affected only four EC members—Italy, France, West Germany, and the UK. The Community settled on a joint response, however, in order to counter the predominant economic strength of the United States and to combine the economic authority of the Commission with the political resolve of the 10 member governments.	The controversy highlighted political cooperation's importance in EC economic policy decisions. It also strengthened EPC's ties to formal EC institutions, particularly in the form of close cooperation between EPC instances and the EC Commission.
The Middle East September 1982–present	In September 1982 the EC foreign ministers welcomed President Reagan's proposal for Palestinian home rule in the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan. The European Council has stressed repeatedly that an end to Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza together with the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon are preconditions for a comprehensive settlement for the region.	Recent discussions of the Middle East have resulted in no procedural innovations.

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New Departures in European Political Cooperation

European Community governments have intensified their foreign policy collaboration in the past two years.¹ EC foreign ministries now consult more frequently at both the ministerial and working-group levels, and the Community has adopted several new procedures to facilitate policy coordination and crisis management. In addition, as the informal European Political Cooperation (EPC) process increasingly addresses political-economic issues, EPC becomes more entwined with the formal institutions of the European Community. Although the EC treaties make no provision for a common foreign policy beyond clearly delineated economic issues, the Ten—and particularly West Germany and Italy—are pressing for closer policy coordination to foster the appearance of growing European unity despite intractable problems facing economic integration and to facilitate joint and timely responses to external crises (see table 1). As a result, the United States increasingly confronts joint EC policies over which it enjoys limited influence and is being pressured to speed its own decisionmaking process on issues such as Poland and the Middle East.

This paper describes these new procedures, examines interactions between EPC and other Community institutions, and briefly addresses implications for the United States.

New EPC Procedures

In our judgment, most of the innovations in EPC in the past two years are aimed at strengthening the EC's ability to respond quickly and pragmatically to crisis situations while maintaining continuity in policymaking that could be lost as a result of hastily made, ad hoc decisions (see inset on EPC organization).

At their London meeting in October 1981, EC foreign ministers approved the establishment of a so-called *troika*—high-level representatives chosen from within

The Organization of EPC

European Political Cooperation comprises multilevel deliberations on international political issues that are outside the EC's formal jurisdiction as specified in its founding treaties. According to the foreign ministers' report that established the EPC mechanism in July 1970, its purposes are to align viewpoints, formulate common policies, and take joint action. At a minimum, the EC governments have promised as a general rule not to adopt individual foreign policies before consulting one another in the political cooperation framework.

Because EC foreign policy coordination has no institutional foundation, its evolution has been informal. The 10 EC foreign ministers play the crucial role. They assume the presidency of the EPC on a six-month rotating basis and hold two special EPC meetings during each term of office. In addition, since their two-day informal session at Gymnich near Bonn in 1974, they have held a third meeting every six months with no fixed agenda and few or no advisers. The foreign ministers are the source of most EC external policy initiatives.

Political cooperation, however, extends to levels below and above the foreign ministers. A Political Committee, composed of political directors in the 10 foreign ministries along with an EC Commission representative, forms the central coordinating body. The Committee holds monthly two-day sessions and also meets on the margins of international conferences in which all 10 states participate. So-called European correspondents in each foreign ministry assist the political directors and maintain close contacts with one another through COREU, a secure telegraphic link among the 10 EC capitals. Functional and geographic working groups prepare reports and drafts of speeches and declarations.

In addition, since 1974 the EC heads of government have met three times a year as the European Council. The Council's technical relationship with EPC is ambiguous. Originally, the Council dealt formally only with EC-treaty matters, but it now also addresses foreign policy. In practice, the European Council forms the highest level of political cooperation.

the national foreign ministries of the past, present, and future president-countries—to assure the flow of information among EC capitals and the continuity of EPC policies. EC governments further provided that the troika approach could be used, if deemed necessary by the Ten, in consultations with third governments:

- A first informal meeting between the EC troika and US officials took place in New York in September 1982.
- In February 1983 the political directors appeared at a second US-EC troika meeting with a formal agenda and an EC mandate to present specific viewpoints.
- In April 1983 the Ten established biannual troika meetings with representatives of the 11 non-EC members of the Council of Europe.
- The EC has agreed that regular consultations should be held between Japan and the EC troika on the margins of major multilateral conferences.
- The troika of EC foreign ministers will meet with foreign ministers of the Contadora countries on the margin of this fall's UN General Assembly, further establishing an accepted international role for the EPC process. [redacted]

In the report of the same London meeting, the Ten agreed to add *crisis management* to the administrative and consultative functions of EPC. [redacted]

[redacted] failure to formulate an EC policy quickly following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the Iranian hostage crisis in 1980 convinced EC governments of the need to react quickly as a group, before individual members are forced to take independent action in an international crisis. These two events, in our judgment, highlighted

the inability of the existing political cooperation process to distinguish between global developments that require an immediate EC response and events that can be addressed by members outside of EPC. Adopting a proposal by British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, EC foreign ministers proclaimed that, henceforth, any three members could call an emergency EPC foreign ministers' meeting on 48-hour notice. The crisis management function of EPC subsequently permitted quick EC response to martial law in Poland, the Falklands conflict, and Middle East developments in 1982. [redacted]

EC governments increasingly have adopted an *imperfect consensus* form of decisionmaking in lieu of unanimity in EPC. The Greek reservation to the Poland-related sanctions against certain luxury imports from the Soviet Union was the first occasion that an important EPC policy was adopted by less than unanimity. Greece could have threatened to veto the action but instead merely voiced its opposition and was exempted from the Community action. During the Falklands crisis, Ireland and Italy pursued similar strategies when they withdrew from trade measures against Argentina. This movement away from unanimity to consensus-with-exceptions parallels calls from some EC members to make greater use of the majority-voting provisions of the EEC Treaty in Council deliberations. In our judgment, this procedure probably will be available to any member—large or small—on occasions when domestic political pressures restrict participation in symbolically important EC policies. The introduction of imperfect consensus does not imply that EPC policies in the future can be adopted over the expressed opposition of even one member. [redacted]

Defense issues remain technically outside the purview of EPC, but, according to numerous US Embassy reports, EC ministers have begun to discuss frequently political aspects of security and defense issues. EC leaders have told US officials that such discussions complement the work of NATO and allow a role for Ireland, the only EC member that does not belong to the Alliance:

- In late 1981 EC foreign ministers adopted a joint policy on CSCE provisions calling for a European Disarmament Conference in advance of NATO discussions on that subject.

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- In February 1983 West Germany and the United Kingdom persuaded their EC partners to draft a response to the Warsaw Pact's proposal for a nonaggression treaty between the military blocs. Only strong pressure from the United States convinced the EC states to await action by NATO.
- At a press conference in March 1983, West German Foreign Minister Genscher affirmed the EC's right to discuss the repercussions on East-West relations of the Geneva INF talks but not the INF negotiations per se. In September, however, a Greek proposal to discuss a six-month moratorium on INF deployment at an EPC ministerial meeting was soundly rejected by the other nine members. []

The political directors this spring created an experimental *super working group* charged with long-range planning. Composed of members from the 10 foreign ministries' planning staffs, the group will analyze specific topics suggested by the political committee. A first trial project will address the EC's relations with the Third World. The US Embassy in Bonn reports that the West German Foreign Ministry, which first proposed the idea in 1978, regards its adoption as a significant step toward closer political cooperation. []

US Embassy reports from Bonn confirm that EC members have agreed to examine ways to *pool logistic support* for their diplomatic missions in third-country capitals, not only for symbolic reasons but also due to the increasing workload that EPC places on member states' foreign missions. Proposed by West Germany five years ago, initial developments probably will include shared use of couriers, common procurement procedures, joint medical services, and other logistic and administrative aspects of the diplomatic services. According to these Embassy reports, there even have been exploratory discussions of combined diplomatic representation for the Ten in minor posts. []

In June EC leaders approved the *Solemn Declaration on European Union* (see inset) that proposes to link EPC more closely to EC institutions as a step toward future European union. In the Declaration, the Ten resolve to strengthen EPC through intensified consultation and to arrive at joint actions and positions in a

The Solemn Declaration on European Union

The Declaration adopted by the European Council at Stuttgart on 19 June 1983 is primarily a symbolic step toward West European political integration. It is a weakened version of a proposal by West German Foreign Minister Genscher and Italian Foreign Minister Colombo in 1981 delineating the political functions of EC institutions and calling for closer cooperation in legal, cultural, and foreign affairs []

The Solemn Declaration stresses EPC's importance to European integration. It calls for: 25X1

- *Strengthening the presidency's powers of initiative, coordination, and representation in relations with third countries.* 25X1
- *Increasing operational support to successive presidencies.*
- *Achieving joint positions and joint action in a growing number of foreign policy fields* [] 25X1

The Declaration codified the practices evolved in EPC. It notes that:

- *The distinction between the foreign ministers' discussions in the Council and EPC consultations has largely disappeared.* 25X1
- *EPC deals with political and economic aspects of security issues.*
- *The presidency reports regularly to the European Parliament on issues discussed in EPC* [] 25X1

growing number of foreign policy fields, including the political and economic aspects of security. The Declaration further codifies existing EPC practices and specifically cites the contributions of the formal EC institutions and the European Council to EPC developments. Nevertheless, continued insistence by some members—particularly Denmark and Greece—on full diplomatic freedom precluded specifying any reference to a common foreign policy as the long-term objective of EC political cooperation. [] 25X1

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Interactions With Formal EC Institutions

In the past two years, the formal institutions of the Community increasingly have supported greater political cooperation among the Ten and, for all practical purposes, have incorporated EPC policies and procedures fully into the EC framework:

- EPC discussions initially were kept separate from formal sessions of the *Council of Ministers*—EC foreign ministers on one occasion in 1973 traveled between two capitals in the same day to avoid the appearance of mixing their Council and EPC roles. But the distinction has become blurred because the foreign ministers—the principal decisionmakers for both EC and EPC policies—have found it convenient to merge the two in practice. A West German Foreign Ministry official wrote recently that EPC deliberations have become inextricably bound to the monthly Foreign Affairs Council and other special meetings of the 10 foreign ministers.
- Communiqués of recent *European Council* meetings confirm that the heads of government in practice have become the highest level of political decision making in the Community for both treaty-related and EPC issues. For example, the European Council at its most recent meeting in Stuttgart issued for the first time EPC declarations on political developments in Central America and also tackled the thorny internal issues related to future EC finances, including reform of EC agricultural programs, which previously had been primarily the domain of EC finance and agriculture ministers.
- *Commission officials*, who attend Foreign Affairs Council sessions, are present at most EPC meetings, although they have no formal say in the proceedings. EPC provides new opportunities for the Commission to expand its role in EC foreign policy, as when Commission officials seized the lead in galvanizing EC political opposition to US export control policies, including the pipeline sanctions and the renewal of the Export Administration Act. Commission officials also were included in last September's troika discussions between the United States and representatives of the Ten.

- The *European Parliament's* role in EPC remains strictly advisory, and its decisions have no binding or legal effect. Nevertheless, the Parliament debates EPC issues, puts questions to the president-country, and passes resolutions. These limited powers are forcing EC members to consult more closely with the Parliament, which has become increasingly critical and vocal since its first direct and popular election in 1979. [REDACTED]

The Role of the Presidency

Despite these developments and new procedures for strengthening foreign policy cooperation, EPC remains essentially informal and unstructured. EPC is highly dependent for its momentum upon the leadership of the Council president—a position that rotates among EC members every six months. The recent presidencies of Denmark and West Germany illustrate how bureaucratic constraints, the idiosyncracies of political leaders, and domestic political pressures in the president-country can influence that leadership and, thus, EPC developments. [REDACTED]

A comparison of the two presidencies shows that the size and efficiency of the president-country's foreign ministry can affect the scope and pace of EPC. A large, centralized, and highly specialized bureaucracy can more easily accommodate increased demands for meetings, briefings, and diplomatic exchanges that fall upon the EPC president. According to US Embassy reports, West Germany, for example, assigned 10 staff members to work on EPC matters during its presidency whereas the previous Danish Government could only manage four. The smaller members admit to US officials that the staffs of their foreign ministries are strained to capacity when the Council president's role passes to them. [REDACTED]

Personal leadership styles also have influenced EPC developments. For instance, West Germany took an especially active role in EPC during its presidency in the spring of 1983 because of Genscher's personal interest in coupling EPC with the Community institutions. US Embassy officials in Bonn, moreover, reported that Genscher regarded distinctions between

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EC and EPC issues as foolish. Furthermore, the national election in West Germany last March intensified Genscher's interest in promoting political cooperation to strengthen his leadership image at home as a capable and respected statesman. Reports from the Embassy relate that, on more than one occasion, he imaginatively manipulated EPC discussions in order to place himself in the limelight and to play down differences among the Ten that could have reflected poorly on him and his leadership ability. In our view, Genscher's active involvement contributed to the perception that West Germany was a locomotive for EPC even though the number of scheduled EPC meetings was not significantly greater than that held by his Danish predecessor. [redacted]

Domestic political constraints in the president-country also affect the pace of EPC developments. No significant new EPC policies or procedures emerged during Denmark's presidency in the fall of 1982 principally because the government's attention was riveted to national affairs. Coalition changes forced a government crisis in Copenhagen and the center-right minority government that emerged was in a weak position to steward the EPC cause. In our opinion, Copenhagen was forced to play a passive role in EPC deliberations because of significant anti-EC sentiment among the Socialist-led opposition parties. The Schlueter government could not have afforded to be forceful even in opposing EPC policies for fear that resulting criticism from its EC partners would stoke domestic support for opposition programs. As a result, EPC received little direction from Denmark last fall. [redacted]

EPC responsibilities can in turn affect the president-country's policies. US Embassies in both Copenhagen and Bonn noted the tendency of the Danish and West German Governments to choose a neutral position or join a consensus in EPC that they would not have done had they not been in the chair. For example, West Germany reportedly felt compelled to agree to the EC statement on the Middle East last March because of its position as Council president even though Genscher and Chancellor Kohl were not in full agreement with their partners. Denmark supported continuation of EC import sanctions against the Soviet Union in December 1982, even though the Danish

Table 2
EC Council Presidents

Country	Date
Greece	July-December 1983
France	January-June 1984
Ireland	July-December 1984
Italy	January-June 1985
Luxembourg	July-December 1985
Netherlands	January-June 1986
Portugal ^a	July-December 1986
United Kingdom	January-June 1987
Belgium	July-December 1987
Denmark	January-June 1988
West Germany	July-December 1988
Greece	January-June 1989
Spain ^a	July-December 1989
France	January-June 1990
Ireland	July-December 1990

^a Portugal and Spain anticipate becoming EC members on 1 January 1986. Should their accession be delayed, the Council presidency would pass in sequence to the next member.

[redacted] 25X1

parliament did not endorse the measures and subsequently forced the government to withdraw unilaterally from the sanctions in violation of EC law. [redacted]

Prospects for EPC

We believe EPC will stagnate under the Greek presidency and then will continue to evolve at a moderate pace over the next year or two, although future president-countries may attempt to accelerate or brake temporarily EPC developments for internal reasons (see table 2). [redacted] 25X1

The Greek Presidency: July-December 1983. We believe that Greece will not attempt to limit EPC procedures, but it probably will continue to create substantive difficulties for policy cooperation. Political considerations—including significant domestic opposition to EC membership—probably will lead to

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further Greek pronouncements on foreign policy at odds with the other EC members' views. Athens has shown its willingness to block EC action by its veto in September of a strong condemnation of the Soviet Union for downing a South Korean airliner. [redacted]

Greece's presidency gives prominence to its dissenting views but does not enable Athens to initiate policies against the will of other members. Several Greek proposals for initiatives with anti-US overtones have already provoked sharp opposition from the other EC partners. For instance, the US Embassy in Athens reports that the other members have repeatedly rebuffed Greece's suggestions that the EC conduct factfinding missions to the Middle East and Central America. In the case of the Middle East, the others insist on prior consultations with the United States; in the case of Central America, the others want a prior troika meeting with the Contadora foreign ministers. At their September EPC meeting, EC foreign ministers sharply rejected Athens' suggestion that the Ten discuss a six-month moratorium on INF deployment in Western Europe and vehemently refuted statements by Foreign Minister Haralambopoulos that such discussions took place. [redacted]

The relative size and inexperience of the Greek foreign office bureaucracy, in any case, limit Athens' ability to preside over the political cooperation process. Athens does not have the manpower that its West German predecessor allocated to EPC affairs. Moreover, expertise on EC affairs is limited both in Greek Embassies overseas and in Athens. Greece has reduced the number of EPC working-group sessions and agenda topics during its presidency partly because of the time-consuming budget crisis within the Community but also probably because of its lack of bureaucratic experience. In our opinion, the rancorous encounters between Haralambopoulos and his EC colleagues could sour the atmosphere at the off-the-record weekend session of foreign ministers in October, the EPC ministerial meeting in November, and the European Council meeting in December, but are unlikely to affect routine working groups and monthly EC Council meetings. We believe Greece's partners may seek to shift EPC discussions to forums below the foreign minister level, which receive less publicity and where personal relations are considerably more cordial. [redacted]

The French Presidency: January-June 1984. Unlike Greece, France will probably take an active approach toward political cooperation when it assumes the EC presidency. Like West Germany, France has a large and experienced cadre of foreign service professionals, both at home and abroad, to oversee EPC meetings and policies. Paris strongly supports EPC's informal, nonbureaucratic, and intergovernmental nature, which accords with traditional French views of European integration. Moreover, according to the US Mission to the EC, the Mitterrand government does not share former President Giscard's concern over the erosion of differences between formal and informal EC procedures. [redacted]

Like Greek bilateral relations with the United States, however, French relations with Washington are subject to more frequent and intense periods of stress than US-West German ties. Whereas Bonn viewed EPC as complementary to fostering a broader transatlantic consensus, we believe Paris probably will promote EPC as an effective forum in which EC agreement can be forged to balance or counter US policies—particularly in economic relations—prior to head-to-head negotiations with Washington. We expect Paris will be reserved in receiving US views and will conduct consultations on EPC issues with US officials in a formal and official manner, possibly frustrating US efforts to accommodate EPC in future policy discussions. [redacted]

US Interests and EPC

The continuing growth of the political cooperation process and the frequency of EPC meetings mean that the United States increasingly will encounter coordinated EC views on a variety of foreign policy issues. We believe the Ten often will strive to overcome differences among themselves over how to react to global crises by forging a joint stance at EPC meetings prior to consultations with the United States in bilateral discussions or in multilateral forums such as NATO. In our judgment, therefore, US ability to influence EPC will face growing limitations. Ironically, US policy will have the most direct impact on EPC policies when it provokes a strongly united and negative EC reaction, as in recent US-EC economic disputes. [redacted]

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The United States has the best chance of influencing EPC when there is a close and cooperative relationship with the country holding the Council presidency. On the other hand, strained bilateral relations with the president-country can hamstring US efforts to weigh in at EPC meetings and could lead to an overall worsening in US-EC relations. West Germany, during its term as president, went out of its way to obtain US views for presentation at EPC working-group meetings. According to the US Embassy in Bonn, West German officials sometimes read to their EC colleagues directly from State Department talking points and relayed verbatim to US officials the contents of restricted internal EC messages. [REDACTED]

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The Greeks and French, during their presidencies, cannot be expected to pursue consultations with the United States so vigorously. A Luxembourg official confided in September to the US Embassy that France has objected to the practice of reading verbatim US talking points at Political Committee meetings and the Greek political director has since discontinued this practice. Nor can a government that takes a passive approach to its EPC chairmanship—as Denmark did in the fall of 1982—be a forceful go-between for Washington, even if bilateral relations remain cordial. In our assessment, close bilateral relations between Washington and major EC capitals—especially Bonn and London—are not sufficient to ensure that US interests always will be safeguarded in EPC discussions because of the president-country's control over EPC proceedings—as demonstrated at the recent foreign ministers' meeting in Athens. [REDACTED]

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We believe the United States can influence the pace and scope of EPC by engaging EC governments in established multilateral forums—such as NATO, the OECD, and GATT—when discussing transatlantic issues. EPC is nurtured, in our judgment, when EC members perceive the agendas of existing forums as unmanageable or discussions as unfocused or unproductive. For example, if the Ten believe that consultations within NATO prior to the coming European Disarmament Conference are not unfolding quickly enough, they probably will shift their discussions to EPC meetings to ensure that a West European consensus will exist when the conference opens in January. [REDACTED]

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